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García Márquez's "The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World" : A Representation of Jung's Archetypes

A man washes up on the shores of a small village and is unrecognizable as one of their own. The villagers then proceed to claim the man as their own, giving him the name Esteban and creating a backstory for him. Why does the village accept this deceased stranger as their own? Could it be perhaps that he fulfills something in the villagers' unconscious that they did not even realize needed fulfilling? According to Jung, archetypal ideas are "primordial images which were never reflections of physical events but are spontaneous products of the psychic factor" (para 56). Archetypal ideas are images that are formed from the unconscious. These archetypal forms can then be used to show why the village reacted to the arrival of Esteban. The handsomest drowned man did not belong to any one, yet the village took him in as one of their own, creating a life story for the man, projecting their own wants and desires on Esteban through the backstory they created for him.

The women of the village project themselves onto the unidentified drowned man by creating a backstory for him. Esteban did not belong to any of the surrounding villages, so he was unknown in life. Only when the women "finished cleaning him off did they become aware of the kind of man he was and it left them breathless. Not only was he the tallest, strongest, most virile, and best built man they had ever seen, but even though they were looking at him there was no room for him in their imagination" (García Márquez 290). There was no room for Esteban in

Comment [1]: I mentioned this is a comment below too, but I like the questions you have. They are a great way to get ideas flowing. I think the argument would be stronger if you made these statements for the next draft.

Comment [2]: good working thesis, but maybe add something specifically about archetypes since that seems to be your focus from the title and first part of the intro

Comment [3]: good direct analysis of the quote

the imaginations of the women of the village because he was not housed in their conscious imaginations, rather he was present in their unconscious. This is why the women project their desires for their own archetypes on Esteban by creating a backstory and giving him a name. These actions brought their unconscious desires into their consciousness. Esteban is described as being rather large as “the tallest men’s holliday pants would not fit him, nor the fattest ones’ Sunday shirts, nor the shoes of the one with the biggest feet” (García Márquez 290). Was Esteban truly this large? Or was he just projected as being larger than life so that he could house all of the desires from all the village people? The women make some pretty ill-fitting clothes for Esteban, representing how their backstory was also unfitting for the man. As far as the women of the village were concerned, Esteban was the perfect man. He was not only handsome, but also easily embarrassed by his largeness and considerate of not making others accomodate to it.

The men of the village also project their unconscious desires onto Esteban.

In conclusion,

Comment [4]: Maybe make this a new paragraph? I like the conscious/unconscious idea and the deeper meaning of his size, but I think they can be separate arguments

Comment [5]: You have a lot of great, interesting questions. I think if you answered them, you could add to your argument. I think he was projected as larger than life. Maybe make that a statement, not a question